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SERVICE

USDA'S REPORT TO CONSUMERS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE · OFFICE OF INFORMATION · WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

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What Retailers Think You Especially Need. Retail clothing stores across the country say they're interested in merchandising all-wool clothing that's completely machine washable, and, in their opinion, consumers especially need this easy-care convenience in skirts, slacks, sweaters, socks, and blankets. A U. S. Department of Agriculture survey of retail clothing stores to determine market potential showed that completely launderable all-wool products could use 131 million pounds of wool a year. That means the USDA-developed technique to make wool washable without shrinkage has two-way benefits: Consumers can cut clothing care costs. And wool growers have a sizeable new market for wool. Some washable wool is already in your stores.

They're Stretching Uses of Stretch Cotton. New uses for stretch cotton being developed by U. S. Department of Agriculture research may eventually put cotton back at the top of the list of most-used textile fibers. And that means more's in store for consumers: Men's T-shirts with stretch possibilities from size 38 to 44; women's dresses, auto upholstery, and especially items of clothing where warmth is important. Since USDA-developed stretch cotton, manufacturers have already approved its use in bathing suits, sweaters, knitwear, and hosiery.

Fruit From A Spray Gun? Sound impossible? Well, U. S. Department of Agriculture researchers discovered that a growth retardant chemical sprayed on apple trees not only dwarfed the trees so more can be planted in the same area, it caused the trees to have from 2 to 12 times more flowers. That can mean more fruit in the fall. Still another amazing effect--when the spray was applied on apple trees several days after they were in full bloom the fruit even held its quality longer in storage. Until the scientists thoroughly test cumulative effects on the trees and fruit, the process won't be approved for use by fruit growers. But it does look promising for more and better fruit.

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CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS



From New York To San Francisco 3 Times. Totaling up the meat it inspected for wholesomeness last year, the U. S. Department of Agriculture found that it would fill almost a million refrigerated freight cars. Put end to end, they'd reach from New York to San Francisco 3 times. In all, 29 billion pounds of red meat was inspected. Of this, almost 20 billion pounds were re-inspected as it was processed into prepared meat foods such as frankfurters, sausages, frozen meat dinners, and canned meat products. In safeguarding consumers, USDA inspectors condemned and diverted from food channels about a million pounds, or 33 freight cars of meat and meat products each working day because they were found unfit for food.

NEW PRODUCTS

There's A Frozen Tomato In Your Future. Until now freezing techniques hadn't conquered the tomato successfully. But a new freezing trick--low, low temperature freezing with liquid nitrogen--makes good quality, fresh frozen tomato slices possible, the U. S. Department of Agriculture reports. It's being used on other fruits and vegetables which have freezing problems,--avocados, melons, and papayas. They also may soon be common at the frozen food counters. The new technique improves the quality of asparagus, strawberries, and green beans too.

Kona Coffee Coming. Coffee lovers in mainland U. S. may get a chance to enjoy distinctive Kona coffee from Hawaii before too long. Instant, too! Improved handling practices and jet air-freight will also bring you just-like-you'd-pick-yourself ripe Hawaiian papayas and pineapples. And a possibility from Florida is guacamole, a frozen avocado salad, U. S. Department of Agriculture food marketing specialists say.

SMART SHOPPER

George Washington Never Saw So Many. Tasty red tart cherries, of course. This year's whopping crop broke all records. And because cherries are favorite fare in honor of Washington's birthday month, you'll find them featured at your stores this month, the Agricultural Marketing Service reports.

Take Time To Check Wrappers. When you buy frozen poultry, be sure the wrapping isn't torn. Frozen food that is exposed to air or is poorly packaged dries out and develops off-flavors, U. S. Department of Agriculture food experts say. And, of course, look for the U. S. Department of Agriculture poultry inspection mark for wholesomeness--and the grade mark to help you compare quality and price.

What's Up? What's Down? Potato supplies this winter will be much smaller than a year ago, and during the first half of 1965 sweet potatoes will be again in light supply. Through the winter months relatively high prices are in prospect for both, U. S. Department of Agriculture crop reports show. But there'll be more tomatoes, and substantially more celery, more broccoli and spinach.

PLENTIFULS On The March. Food markets will be featuring eggs, peanuts and peanut products during March. Other plentiful foods include rice, canned pink salmon, red tart cherries, apples, canned pears, carrots, cabbage and celery. Foods in abundant supply usually mean top quality and reasonable prices.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Want To Know About Electric Heating? If you're building a new house, or remodeling, you may find the answers to some of your questions in a one page fact sheet on "Installation of Electric Heating" prepared by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. It explains the 5 types of electric heating units--baseboard heaters, built-in wall heaters, electric floor heaters, ceiling heating cable, and ceiling-mounted heaters. It also gives facts about installation. For a copy of "Installing Electric Heating Factsheet," send post card to Rural Electrification Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

Help Your Community. Civic groups and community leaders eager to give a standstill rural community a new lease on life will find a new U. S. Department of Agriculture publication helpful. It shows the dramatic results local people can accomplish, through organized effort. For a free copy of "Rural Areas Development at Work" (PA-625), send post card to SERVICE, Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. 20250.

Pointers on Plumbing. Even when a plumbing emergency is of major proportions, there are steps you can take to prevent damage before the plumber gets there, U. S. Department of Agriculture engineers say. What to do in an emergency, as well as simple plumbing repairs you can do yourself, are explained in a new USDA booklet. For extensive repair or alterations, a qualified, licensed plumber is recommended. These jobs usually require authorization from local authorities, possibly followed by an inspection of completed work. For "Simple Plumbing Repairs"(FB-2202), send ten cents to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C. 20402.

PLANTS AND INSECTS

House Plants Sickly? Overwatering is the commonest cause of trouble, U. S. Department of Agriculture plant specialists say. So slow down and see.

Research Stresses Killing Pests Without Pesticides. U. S. Department of Agriculture and cooperating state researchers will put considerable emphasis in 1965 on insect pest control that eventually may lead to reduced use of insecticides. New possibilities include biological control (insects that kill other insects, parasites, or insect diseases); insect sterilization; developing "attractants" which can lure the insect to traps or poison; or developing plants more resistant to insects. Each method has its own merits, and limitations, and each is being studied with an eye to integration into an overall pest control plan. Insects destroy billions of dollars worth of crops a year, and add to consumer costs, too.

FOODS

The Plum That Went To School. Want your child to learn to eat new foods? Or familiar foods in new forms? Then encourage him to participate in the National School Lunch Program administered by the U. S. Department of Agriculture. He'll likely try new foods when he sees other children eating them. Purple plums from the Northwest were a hit, for example, when introduced to the children in the South. And when the National School Lunch Program carried corn bread to California, the kids wanted it once a week. The program, which enables 17 million children to get a lunch for about 27 cents each, has been a major factor in introducing new foods, too. It teaches children how to choose well-balanced diets for good health.

Scientists, You, And The Sweet Corn. Know how irritated you get when you pull down the husks of sweet corn in the grocery store or your kitchen and spot a worm? Well, U. S. Department of Agriculture research scientists are coming to your rescue--and the farmer's. They've found the substance in the silks and fresh kernels which makes the corn tasty to the worm. In fact, if they soak paper in this substance, the worms will eat the paper. Next step: Develop corn which won't be so tasty to worms. Or reproduce the substance for a bait to trap the worm before it can damage the corn, and reduce the need for insectide sprays.

Don't Pour Vitamins Down The Drain. If you cook vegetables in lots of water and then pour the water down the drain, you may lose nutrients important to your health. Some minerals, vitamins C and the B vitamins are soluble in water. So cook vegetables only until tender in just enough water to prevent scorching, U. S. Department of Agriculture nutritionists suggest. And cover tightly. They say the so-called "waterless" cooking actually refers to cooking vegetables with only the water remaining after you rinse them, plus their own juice. This method does not permit quick cooking, however. And it does not conserve nutritive values any better than cooking vegetables quickly in a minimum amount of water in any utensil with a tight lid that's heavy enough to prevent escape of vapor and steam.

Smart Storage. Since meat takes a big share of your food dollar, storing it properly means money--and better eating for your family. Here's what U. S. Department of Agriculture nutritionists suggest: Loosen the wrapper on ground meat, poultry, fish, liver, kidney, brains, and other variety meats. They benefit from some circulation of air. Store them in the coldest part of the refrigerator, but use within 1 to 2 days. Roasts, chops, and steaks can be stored safely from 3 to 5 days.

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